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The Blackest Page of Modern History

Events in Armenia in 1915

The Facts and the Responsibilities

By

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Author of

"The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire," "The
New Map of Europe," etc.



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"And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?"

Genesis iv., 9.

The Blackest Page of Modern History

FOREWORD

THE war that started on August 1, 1914, has gradually involved nations, large and small, not originally participants. Other nations, large and small, while still managing to maintain an official neutrality, have found themselves drawn into diplomatic controversies with both groups of belligerents. With the exception of South America, the continents of the world have sent contingents to fight in Europe. The destinies of Africa, Asia, and Australia are at stake, and the destinies

of the western hemisphere will, long before the end is reached, be influenced vitally by the tremendous events that are taking place in Europe. We can, then, without exaggeration, call the war that was provoked by the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, a world war.

Still in the midst of war, still prejudiced by our sympathies and our interests, neither participants nor spectators are in a position to form a definitive judgment upon the many problems of the origin of the war, and upon controversial points that have arisen between the belligerents and between belligerents and neutrals, because of acts of war.

But can we assume the attitude of suspending judgment in regard to all that has happened since August, 1914, and all that is happening to-day? The world at heart is not cold-blooded. The world at heart is not

hopelessly selfish. The world at heart is not deaf to the appeal of the innocent and helpless. Else we should have reason indeed to believe in the complete disappearance of our twentieth-century Christian civilization. If some issues are debatable, if some events are obscure, if some charges and counter-charges cannot be determined, there are others that can be determined.

It is because the Armenian massacres in Turkey are clearly established, because responsibilities can be definitely fixed, and because an appeal to humanity can be made on behalf of the remnant of the Armenian race in the Ottoman Empire without the slightest suspicion of political interest, that I feel it advisable and imperative at this moment to call attention to what is undoubtedly the blackest page in modern history, to

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set forth the facts, and to point out the responsibilities.

HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS.

Paris, December 1, 1915.

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INTRODUCTORY

IN the summer of 1908, when the Young Turks compelled Abdul Hamid to re-establish the constitution he had granted, and almost immediately suppressed, at the beginning of his reign thirty years before, they had a good press throughout the civilized world. Writers of all nations lauded the Young Turks, and described in glowing terms the wonderful future of the Ottoman Empire under the régime of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The goodwill of Europe and America, and practical encouragement as well, was given to the reformers of Turkey in every possible way. Especially among the Powers,

Great Britain and France aided the Young Turks to establish the new régime by lending them money and capable advisers for the Treasury and Navy, the two departments of the Turkish Government that were the weakest.

One has only to look through the files of the newspapers of Occidental Europe to establish the truth of this statement. As one of the group of writers for the European and American press on Turkish affairs, during the first difficult (and disappointing!) years of the constitutional régime, I can say honestly that our loyalty to the Young Turks was unswerving. In the hope that the end would justify the means, I am afraid that there was not one of us who did not occasionally sin against his own convictions by *suppressio veri*, if not by

actual *suggestio falsi*. Occidental diplomacy was just as loyal to Young Turkey as was Occidental journalism. Successive Grand Viziers assured me that the loyal co-operation of London and Paris, through willingness to forbear criticism and to leave much unsaid, had made possible the maintenance of the newly-established constitution throughout the first difficult winter, and the weathering of the storm of Abdul Hamid's attempted counter-revolution.

It was my fortune to go to Turkey during the first month of the new régime, and to live in Asia Minor and Constantinople until after the disastrous war with the Balkan States. From 1908 to 1913, I enjoyed exceptional opportunities of travelling in European and Asiatic Turkey, of becoming acquainted with the

men who were guiding the destinies of the Ottoman Empire, and of witnessing the fatal events that changed in five years the hope of regeneration into the despair of dissolution. At Smyrna, at Constantinople, and at Beirut, I took part in the fêtes to celebrate the birth of the new régime, and saw the ostensible reconciliation of Christian, Moslem, and Jewish elements. Christian priests and Moslem ulema embraced each other and drove through the streets in triumphal procession in the same carriages.

Above all, from the very beginning, I was in a position to become intimately acquainted with the Armenians of Turkey and to find out their real sentiments towards the Young Turks and the new régime. I was in Adana, in April, 1909, when their enthusiastic loyalty was re-

warded by a massacre of thirty thousand of them in Cilicia and northern Syria. I was able to observe the attitude of the Armenians before the massacre. Their blood was spilled before my eyes in Adana. I was with them in different places after the fury of the massacre had passed.

This preamble in the first person is reluctantly written. But I feel that it must be given, in order that I may anticipate exception to my statements on the ground that I am "not acquainted with the problem," and that "it is impossible for an outsider to form a judgment on these matters." For I have always found that the Turk *and his friends*, when you speak to them on the Armenian question, flatly deny your facts and challenge the competency of your judg-

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ment. It is necessary, then, for me to state that the facts set forth here are given with intimate personal knowledge of their authenticity, and that the judgments passed upon these facts are the result of years of study and observation at close range.

CHAPTER I

IN APRIL, 1915, THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT BEGAN TO PUT INTO EXECUTION THROUGHOUT TURKEY A SYSTEMATIC AND CAREFULLY-PREPARED PLAN TO EXTERMINATE THE ARMENIAN RACE. IN SIX MONTHS NEARLY A MILLION ARMENIANS HAVE BEEN KILLED. THE NUMBER OF THE VICTIMS AND THE MANNER OF THEIR DESTRUCTION ARE WITHOUT PARALLEL IN MODERN HISTORY.

IN the autumn of 1914, the Turks began to mobilize Christians as well as Moslems for the army. For six months, in every part of Turkey, they

called upon the Armenians for military service. Exemption money was accepted from those who could pay. A few weeks later the exemption certificates were disregarded, and their holders enrolled. The younger classes of Armenians, who did not live too far from Constantinople, were placed, as in the Balkan wars, in the active army. The older ones, and all the Armenians enrolled in the more distant regions, were utilized for road, railway, and fortification building. Wherever they were called, and to whatever task they were put, the Armenians did their duty, and worked for the defence of Turkey. They proved themselves brave soldiers and intelligent and industrious labourers.

In April, 1915, orders were sent out from Constantinople to the local author-

ties in Asia Minor to take whatever measures were deemed best to paralyse in advance an attempt at rebellion on the part of the Armenians. The orders impressed upon the local authorities that the Armenians were an extreme danger to the safety of the empire, and suggested that national defence demanded imperatively *anticipatory* severity in order that the Armenians might be rendered harmless.

In some places, the local authorities replied that they had observed no suspicious activity on the part of the Armenians and reminded the Government that the Armenians were harmless because they possessed no arms and because the most vigorous masculine element had already been taken for the army. There are some Turks who have a sense of pity

and a sense of shame! But the majority of the Turkish officials responded with alacrity to the hint from Constantinople, and those who did not were very soon replaced.

A new era of Armenian massacres began.

At first, in order that the task might be accomplished with the least possible risk, the virile masculine Armenian population still left in the cities and villages was summoned to assemble at a convenient place, generally outside the town, and gendarmes and police saw to it that the summons was obeyed. None was overlooked. When they had rounded up the Armenian men, they butchered them. This method of procedure was generally feasible in small places. In larger cities, it was not always possible to fulfil the

orders from Constantinople so simply and promptly. The Armenian notables were assassinated in the streets or in their homes. If it was an interior city, the men were sent off under guard to "another town." In a few hours the guard would return without their prisoners. If it was a coast city, the Armenians were taken away in boats outside the harbour to "another port." The boats returned astonishingly soon without the passengers.

Then, in order to prevent the possibility of trouble from Armenians mobilized for railway and road construction, they were divided in companies of from three hundred to five hundred and put to work at intervals of several miles. Regiments of the Turkish regular army were sent "to put down the Armenian revolution,"

and came suddenly upon the little groups of workers plying pickaxe, crowbar, and shovel. The "rebels" were riddled with bullets before they knew what was happening. The few who managed to flee were followed by mounted men, and shot or sabred.

Telegrams began to pour in upon Talaat bey at Constantinople, announcing that here, there, and everywhere Armenian uprisings had been put down, and telegrams were returned, congratulating the local officials upon the success of their prompt measures. To neutral newspaper men at Constantinople, to neutral diplomats, who had heard vaguely of a recurrence of Armenian massacres, this telegraphic correspondence was shown as proof that an imminent danger had been averted. "We have not been cruel,

but we admit having been severe," declared Talaat bey. "This is war time."

Having thus rid themselves of the active manhood of the Armenian race, the Turkish Government still felt uneasy. The old men and boys, the women and children, were an element of danger to the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians must be rooted out of Turkey. But how accomplish this in such a way that the Turkish Ambassador at Washington and the German newspapers might be able to say, as they have said and are still saying, "All those who have been killed were of that rebellious element caught red-handed or while otherwise committing traitorous acts against the Turkish Government, and *not women and children*, as some of these *fabricated* reports would have the Americans believe?" Talaat

bey was ready with his plan. Deportation—a regrettable measure, a military necessity—but perfectly humane.

From May until October the Ottoman Government pursued methodically a plan of extermination far more hellish than the worst possible massacre. Orders for deportation of the entire Armenian population to Mesopotamia were despatched to every province of Asia Minor. These orders were explicit and detailed. No hamlet was too insignificant to be missed. The news was given by town criers that *every* Armenian was to be ready to leave at a certain hour for an unknown destination. There were no exceptions for the aged, the ill, the women in pregnancy. Only rich merchants and bankers and good-looking women and girls were allowed to escape by professing Islâm,

and let it be said to their everlasting honour that few availed themselves of this means of escape. The time given varied from two days to six hours. No household goods, no animals, no extra clothing could be taken along. Food supply and bedding was limited to what a person could carry. And they had to go *on foot* under the burning sun through parched valleys and over snow-covered mountain passes, a journey of from three to eight weeks.

When they passed through Christian villages where the deportation order had not yet been received, the travellers were not allowed to receive food or ministrations of any sort. The sick and the aged and the wee children fell by the roadside, and did not rise again. Women in childbirth were urged along by bayo-

nets and whips until the moment of deliverance came, and were left to bleed to death. The likely girls were seized for harems, or raped day after day by the guards until death came as a merciful release. Those who could committed suicide. Mothers went crazy, and threw their children into the river to end their sufferings. Hundreds of thousands of women and children died of hunger, of thirst, of exposure, of shame.

The pitiful caravans thinned out, first daily, and later hourly. Death became the one thing to be longed for: for how can hope live, how can strength remain, even to the fittest, in a journey that has no end? And if they turned to right or left from that road to hell, they were shot or speared. Kurds and mounted peasants hunted down those

who succeeded in escaping the roadside guards.

They are still putting down the Armenian revolution out there in Asia Minor. I had just written the above paragraph when an English woman whom I have known for many years came to my home. She left Adana, in Cilicia, only a month ago. Her story is the same as that of a hundred others. I have the identical facts, one eye-witness testimony corroborating the other, from American, English, German, and Swiss sources. This English woman said to me, "The deportation is still going on. From the interior along the Bagdad Railway they are still being sent through Adana on the journey of death. As far as the railway exists, it is being used to hurry the work of extermination faster than the caravans from the

regions where there are no railways. Oh! if they would only massacre them, and be done with it, as in the Hamidian days! I stood there at the Adana railway station, and from the carriages the women would hold up their children, and cry for water. They had got beyond a desire for bread. Only water! There was a pump. I went down on my knees to beg the Turkish guard to let me give them a drink. But the train moved on, and the last I heard was the cry of those lost souls. That was not once. It was almost every day the same thing. Did Lord Bryce say eight hundred thousand? Well, it must be a million now. Could you conceive of human beings allowing wild animals to die a death like that?"

But the Turkish Ambassador in Washington declares that these stories are "fabrications," and that "no women and children have been killed."

CHAPTER II

THE ARMENIANS, AS A RACE, HAVE NEVER BEEN, AND ARE NOT, A MENACE TO THE SECURITY OF TURKEY. THEY ARE BLAMELESS OF THE CHARGE OF DISLOYALTY, WHICH HAS BEEN THE EXCUSE FOR THEIR MASSACRE AND DEPORTATION.

In commenting upon the report of the American Committee, on Armenian Atrocities, Djelal Munif bey, the Turkish Consul-General in New York, declared: "However much to be deplored may be these harrowing events in the last analysis, we can but say the Armenians have only themselves to blame."

Djelal Munif bey went on to explain that the Armenians had been planning a revolution, and were killed by the Turkish soldiers only after they had been caught "red-handed with arms in their hands, resisting lawful authority."

This has been the invariable explanation for the massacre of Armenians in Turkey. We heard it in 1895-1896 and in 1909. We have been hearing it again in 1915. But facts to substantiate it have never been given. On the other hand, there exists overwhelming evidence of the most convincing character to show how inadmissible it is as an explanation, how baseless it is as a charge.

I have talked personally with, or have seen letters and reports from, American missionaries and consular officials of all nations, who were witnesses of the massa-

cers of 1895 and 1896. At that time, as a result of unendurable persecution and injustice, certain organizations of young men, of the type the French call *exaltés*, banded together in secret societies, an imitation of internal organizations in Russia, agitated, within the Ottoman Empire and abroad, for a more favourable treatment of Armenians and other Christians. Some of these *exaltés* certainly advocated, and tried to work for, the independence of Armenia. But the propaganda never gained favour in ecclesiastical circles, nor ground among the great mass of the Armenian population in Turkey. Except in the *vilayet* of Van, the Armenians no longer formed the majority of the population. They were too scattered throughout the empire to have serious hope of winning independ-

ence, such as the Greeks, Bulgarians, Servians, and Rumanians had succeeded in obtaining in the Balkan peninsula.¹

In the 1909 massacre, I was on the ground at the time, and studied these charges. I demonstrated to my own satisfaction (and to that of a number of newspaper men, including Germans) the

¹ I do not mean by this statement to deny that the educated Armenians, just as every other people under the yoke of another race, have not longed, in their most intimate sentiments, for the day when national aspirations would be realized. But, the Armenians are above all a practical people, and they did not look for what they knew was impossible of realization. In the correspondence concerning Armenian people in the Chancelleries of the Great Powers and in the archives of the Sublime Porte, *the question has always been to obtain reforms that would secure for the Armenians only those privileges and only that measure of security and freedom, to which they had the right as Ottoman subjects to aspire.* In 1913, the Powers, among whom was Germany, proposed to the Turkish Government a plan for reforms in Asia Minor, which was accepted and decreed by Turkey, but which was not put into execution. Up to the time of this terrible crime of the past few months, the Armenians demanded, and were glad to have obtained in Turkey, only those reforms that Turkey had agreed herself to put into effect.

total lack of foundation of this charge against the Armenians of Cilicia. Not one Armenian out of a hundred had anything to do with the revolutionary societies. The lower classes were too ignorant to be affected by such a propaganda. The Armenian Church denounced the folly of the visionaries. College professors spoke and wrote against it. The wealthy city classes frankly let the agitators know that they were not only passively, but also actively, opposed to the propaganda.

The Turks had nothing whatever to fear from Armenian revolutionaries. They knew this. More than that, they knew just who the *exaltés* were. The Turkish Government was well able to assure itself that the propagandists were not to be feared. If they had feared them, they could easily have laid their hands on

them any time they wanted to. In Adana, the arrest of from thirty to forty young men would have gathered into the net all the agitators. Instead of that, six thousand were massacred there, and half the city burned. Then the Armenian revolution was trumped up as an excuse!

The hideous miscarriage of justice of the court martial after the Adana massacre was the beginning of the downfall of the Young Turk régime. It was a demonstration of the mockery of the Young Turk assertion that the Ottoman Empire was to be reconstructed on the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. From that day to this, their every act has given the lie to their profession. I say *hideous* miscarriage of justice, because no element in the empire had wel-

comed more heartily the advent of the constitutional régime, no element had supported the Young Turks more loyally than the Armenians. If they erred at all during those first nine months of the constitutional era, it was in showing so openly—and so joyously—their touching faith in the men of Salonika. They accepted the revolution as sincere. Their support of the new régime was spontaneous and enthusiastic. They believed in the Young Turks—until they were undeceived by the Young Turks themselves.

After the massacre had stopped, *on word from Constantinople*, I heard a Young Turk officer address the survivors in the courtyard of the American Mission at Tarsus. He assured them that the danger was over, that it had been due to the

counter-revolution of Abdul Hamid, and that now they might feel assured that Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were really theirs. He told the Armenians that the Young Turks had suffered equally with them, and that they had been companions in misfortune. With sublime faith, sublime even though stupid, the bulk of the Armenians believed once more. They accepted the explanation of the massacre, and continued to support the Ottoman Government.

During the four years after Adana, I spent most of my time in Constantinople, and I was constantly with the leaders of the Armenian race. Never once did I hear an Armenian ecclesiastic or other Armenian of weight and reputation speak against the Ottoman Government. I know positively that they were not

working against the Ottoman Government. On the other hand, I am sure that the Turks knew they could count on the loyal support and co-operation of the Armenians. The Turks had proof of Armenian loyalty during the Italian war and the two Balkan wars. Armenians, enrolled in the Turkish army, fought bravely for the common fatherland beside their Moslem brethren. In the hour of danger and humiliation, the Armenians of Turkey stood by their fellow Ottoman subjects. They gave their blood for Turkey. Unlike the Ottoman Greeks, they could be suspected of no secret wishes for the success of the enemy.

It is unfair for the Ottoman Government to cite, as basis for its charges against its Armenian subjects, the fact that Armenians in large numbers are fighting

in the Russian army. As a result of the war of 1877, Turkey was compelled to cede a portion of Armenia to Russia. The Armenians of these territories and of the Caucasus have been for nearly forty years under Russian rule, and are naturally, as Russian subjects, fighting against Turkey. In giving the fact that there are Armenians in the Russian armies as a reason for doubting the loyalty of the Armenians in Turkey, the Turks and their German apologists have traded upon European and American imperfect knowledge of the history and geography of the regions beyond Van. The formation of corps of Armenian volunteers in the Allied armies, and the open support of the cause of the Allies on the part of Armenian communities in France and Great Britain have

been unfortunate. As individuals who have left Turkey, these exiled Armenians have a right to do as they choose, as communities, it would have been—it is now—better for them to keep quiet. Although they have no justification for doing so, the Turks and Germans have been using the manifestations made by these small communities outside of Turkey as reflecting the spirit and intentions of the Armenians in Turkey, and have succeeded in confusing many neutrals about the real facts of the Armenian situation.

If the Armenians, during the present massacres and forcible deportations, have in some places, as they did in Adana in 1909, defended, arms in hand, their homes and their loved ones, it has been only when the Ottoman Government failed

them, and when they were convinced that their extermination had been decided upon. Even in these cases, as at Adana, when they received assurances of protection against local Moslem fanaticism from the Government at Constantinople, they trusted once more. In every instance of this kind—again let me remind my readers that I have authentic eye-witness testimony—their faith was betrayed. The Ottoman Government officials broke their word, and butchered the Armenians after they had laid down their arms.

With the possible exception of Van, there was no place where the Turks had the slightest ground for suspicion that the local attempt of the Armenians to defend their wives and children was in connivance with the enemy. *And Van*

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is only one of thirty centres of massacre and deportation in Asia Minor!

If the Ottoman Government has facts to establish its contention that the Armenians of Turkey were plotting against the security of the empire, let it lay these facts before the world.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE ARMENIAN ELEMENT IS ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE TO THE WELL-BEING AND PROSPERITY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE. IT HAS BEEN PROVED THROUGH CENTURIES THAT CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS ARE ABLE TO LIVE IN PEACE AND AMITY IN TURKEY, WHICH IS EQUALLY THE COUNTRY OF BOTH.

ONE hesitates, on general principles, to attempt to advise, or to admonish, as to its best interests, a nation at war. In a life and death struggle such as this war has become, it would be naturally supposed that a

nation and its rulers are the best judges of what it is to their interest to do. Advice from outside sources is open to the suspicion of being not disinterested. And does not admonition, if not sheer impertinence, betray impotence on the part of the admonisher?

But in the Ottoman Empire, the situation is different from that of any other country in Europe. There is not a sufficient number of educated men among the non-Christian elements of the Ottoman Empire to form, let alone to guide, public opinion. Consequently, there is no public opinion. The governing power has always been in the hands of a small and corrupt circle, and the Ottoman nation has not developed in self-government, in popular institutions, as have the other nations of Europe.

The new régime was hailed with joy by the outside world, and by the non-Moslem elements inside the empire as well, because the Constitution of 1908 was regarded as the starting point in a struggle of the people of the empire, irrespective of religion and race, against an absolutism that had in practice proved equally injurious, if not equally oppressive, to all the races subjected to the tyranny of Yildiz Kiosk.

It was very soon seen, however, that Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity had no part whatever in the Young Turk conception of a constitutional state. It was simply the replacing of one clique by another. The honest, sincere Young Turks, with motives above suspicion, who actually meant what they said, were so few in number that they could not prevail

against the type in the Committee of Union and Progress, personified by such men as Talaat, Enver, Djavid, Djemal, Hairi, Ahmed Riza, Dr. Nazim, Hadji Adil, Bedri, and Hussein Djahid. The Moslem population of the empire, being intensely ignorant, could not be looked to by the few enthusiasts to support constitutional principles. The Christian population, much better educated and having much more reason to appreciate the newly-proclaimed liberty, were the only elements upon which a politically regenerated Turkey could stand. *For this reason alone did the Armenian element become immediately a source of danger to the new clique that had replaced Abdul Hamid.* These so-called Young Turks turned upon the Armenians just as Abdul Hamid had turned upon them—to

prevent their becoming the leaven in the regeneration of Turkey. The Constitution, hailed by the Armenians as the beginning of their political emancipation, became almost immediately—and *inevitably*—their death-warrant.

One does not need to study deeply, one has simply to read the history of the Ottoman Empire since Great Britain and France saved the Turks by the Crimean War, to realize that the Armenians, from the moment the question of “reforms” was introduced by the Powers in their dealings with the Sublime Porte, have been the unwitting victims of the cause of civilization in the Near East. The Congress of Berlin fully recognized this fact.

The trans-Caucasian policy of Russia, and the Balkan policy of all the Great

Powers first awakened, and has since been the exciting cause of, the fanaticism of the Moslems of Turkey against the Armenians. Before there was an acute "Question of the Orient," did we ever have great Armenian massacres? And yet, Christian Europe never made a concerted effort to save this unhappy race from the results of Europe's own dealings with the Turks.

The Armenians, of course, always suffered to a certain extent from their social and political disabilities under Moslem rule. But they have lived for centuries in comparative security, and certainly with a large measure of prosperity, as Ottoman subjects. Personal relations between Turks and Armenians have been not at all bad. I have had opportunity to observe this fact in different parts of

Turkey. The Turks are not, like the Arabs, a fanatical people by nature. The persecution and massacre of Armenians is not, as the general European and American public have erroneously thought, an age-old matter of religious strife. Nor has it been, as is so frequently asserted by those who have the effrontery to explain and attempt to condone (ye gods!) Armenian massacres, because the Armenians are money-lenders and oppress the simple-minded Turks. The refutation of the first of these two prevalent beliefs is that the great Armenian massacres are events of the last quarter of a century, while Armenians and Turks have been living together in Asia Minor nearly seven centuries. The refutation of the second is that the massacres have not been confined to the larger cities, where many of

the Armenians are well-to-do, but have always taken place in exactly the same way and in exactly the same degree in communities where the Armenians are both ignorant and poverty-stricken.

Nothing is more stupid, nothing more against nature and history, than advocating that the solution of the Armenian question and salvation of the Armenian race is in emigration *en masse* to America or some other country. The Armenians are an indigenous element in Asiatic Turkey. Their wholesale emigration might save the lives of several hundred thousand individuals. But it would break the hearts of most of those who were thus saved, and it would mark the disappearance of the Armenians as a race and a nation, just as certainly as if their extermination by massacre were

completed. What has the Armenian race done that it should disappear? And is not *jus soli* as strong as the *jus patris*—especially in lands where there is sunshine?

The preservation of the Armenian element in Asia Minor is indispensable to the well-being and prosperity of the Turks themselves. Politically, as well as economically, it is impossible for the Turks to continue to exist as an independent, and in any measure at all self-supporting, nation without the help of the Armenians. The Armenian massacres illustrate the old story of killing the goose that laid the golden egg. In their pitiful ignorance, in their frenzy of blood-lust, the Turks are turning upon and destroying those whose existence is precious and vital to their community and national

life. Travel where you will through Turkey, from one end of the great empire to the other, and you find no community *that is prosperous* without Armenians. Along the seacoast, the Greeks play an important part in the economic life of Turkey. But in the interior the Armenians are a *sine qua non* to the Turks.

Of the Armenians in Turkey one might have said without fear of contradiction before the terrible events of the past six months, that they were in no place numerically strong enough to jeopardize the political independence of the Ottoman Empire, but that they were everywhere in sufficient number to guarantee its economic independence.

Intelligent and patriotic Turks must certainly see that the attempt to exterminate the Armenians, or to banish the

remnant of them from Asia Minor, is a mortal blow to Turkish independence, political as well as economic. The extermination of the Armenians is to the interest of a certain nation—but that nation is not Turkey!

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE PREVENTED THIS EFFORT AT EXTERMINATING THE ARMENIAN RACE, BUT HAS CHOSEN NOT TO DO SO. THERE IS GRAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAS WELCOMED, IF NOT ENCOURAGED, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE ARMENIANS FROM ASIA MINOR, FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF GERMAN POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL DESIGNS ON THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

A PATRIOTIC German woman wrote from Marash on June 4, 1915, to the *Sonnenaufgang*, organ of the *Deutscher Hülfsbund für christliches*

Liebeswerk im Orient: "Oh, if we could write all that we are seeing!" German missionaries in Asia Minor have been fully as horror-stricken, fully as sympathetic, and fully as indignant as the missionaries of other nations. And I have no doubt that there are millions of Germans to-day, who, *if they were allowed to know the truth*, would protest bitterly to their Government against the extermination of the Armenian nation, and petition their Government, in the name of God, to do something to prevent Germany from being stigmatized in history as partner in the awful crimes that are being committed in the Ottoman Empire.

It has been shown that there never has been, and that there is not now, reason for Moslem fanaticism against the Armenian race. Of their own initiative, with-

out the direct command and incitement of the authorities and without the help of the soldiery and gendarmerie, Turks have never massacred Armenians. Since, then, this effort to exterminate the Armenian race, made everywhere in Asiatic Turkey at the same moment, has been due to a systematic scheme, organized and directed from Constantinople, we must seek the responsibility among the officials of the Turkish Government at Constantinople. The deliberate, minutely-planned Armenian massacres and deportations, carried on without interruption from April to November, 1915, must have been conceived by someone, ordered by someone, and perpetrated for some purpose.

Conceived by whom? Ordered by whom? Perpetrated for what purpose?

The conception is not new. It has been

explained above that the Armenians drew upon themselves the distrust and the hatred of the Young Turks because they took the Young Turks seriously, and believed that the Constitution was to be a real constitution. The Adana massacre was the first effort on the part of those who usurped Abdul Hamid's policy and methods when they usurped his authority, to destroy the Armenians. Back in those days I heard more than one prominent Young Turk give hearty assent to the *bon mot* that was then going the rounds, "The only way to get rid of the Armenian question is to get rid of the Armenians!" To finish the work begun at Adana has been a political ideal for six years. The opportunity for realization came. It was seized immediately.

When the attack of the Allies against the

Dardanelles was begun, it was common knowledge at Constantinople that the death-warrant of the Armenian race, long ago signed and put aside in the pigeon-holes of the Sublime Porte and the Seraskerat, would be brought out and put into execution.

Is it possible to believe that the German Embassy was ignorant of this, and that Talaat bey gave the orders without having informed Baron von Wangenheim? Is it possible that the German Government at Berlin did not know of the plan, even if their representative at Constantinople failed to inform them? Here are the facts.

The extermination of a million and a half innocent, loyal to a fault, Christian subjects of the Sultan of Turkey was planned at, and ordered from, Constantinople.

At Constantinople, the one man whose word, supported by his Government, would have prevented the orders from going out, was the German Ambassador.

Although he *may* not have known during the first week or two, the German Ambassador was pled with, *long before it was too late*, to use the influence of Germany to put a stop to what was to prove the blackest page of modern history.

Since Germany refused to intervene before the extermination of the Armenians started, is she not accessory before the fact to the murder by sword, by starvation and thirst, by exposure, by beating, by rape, of nearly a million human beings, whose fault was that they were "in the way," and whose vulnerability and defencelessness lay in the sole fact that they were Christians?

Since Germany has persisted in refusing to intervene during the process of extermination, is she not *particeps criminis*?

Ambassador von Wangenheim declared to Ambassador Morgenthau at Constantinople that Germany could not, upon request of the United States, intervene in the internal affairs of Turkey. Ambassador von Bernstorff at Washington, when he saw what a painful impression the newspaper accounts of the Armenian atrocities were producing on the American public, at first denied that there had been massacres, and, later, when it was impossible to maintain his denial in face of established facts, declared that what had happened in Turkey was a perfectly justifiable suppression of Armenian rebellions.

In one large city of Asiatic Turkey, an

American missionary, a man whom I know personally and whose word can be trusted implicitly, saw a German officer directing the artillery fire of the Turks upon the Armenian civilian population. In two other places, at least, German consuls defended the Ottoman policy both of massacre and of deportation.

On the broader and more general moral ground of responsibility as brother's keeper, the German, *who alone of all European nations have had, and still have the power to stop these massacres*, stand condemned. It is going to be difficult for their writers, who have been foremost in extolling the Armenian race, its virtues, and its contributions to civilization, to defend to the satisfaction of posterity the inertia of the German Government in the

face of the extermination of the Armenian nation.

That they kept quiet, and refused to act, when they alone could have saved the Armenians from destruction, is the first count in the case against the Germans. It is serious. The second count is sinister.

When we try to find the purpose behind the Armenian massacres, we are confronted with what is, under the circumstances, an eloquent accusation against the German Government and the German people. *The Germans, and the Germans alone, will benefit by the extermination of the Armenians.* I have pointed out above how the Armenians are the essential factor, the guarantee indeed, of Turkish economic and political independence in Asia Minor. By the same token, they appear to be a stumbling-block to German

domination. The Armenians, largely educated in French and American schools, speak French and English. Through their commercial relations with western Europe and America, with England most of all, they have naturally been "in the way" of the German commercial travellers. As the one commercial and agricultural element in the interior of Asia Minor, capable of holding its own against a penetration of European colonists, the Armenians are "in the way" of the schemes for the Germanization of Anatolia. It was not for the Bagdad Railway alone, but also for all that the Bagdad Railway implied, that Kaiser Wilhelm II. fraternized with Abdul Hamid, after the massacres of Armenians in 1895 and 1896.

I have not the slightest desire to be

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unfair to Germans as individuals, or to insinuate what can not reasonably be proved to be in the German mind. Enlightened nations, however, are certainly responsible for the acts of their Governments. The Germans have assumed the responsibility for many terrible things in this war. They may hope, when passions have died down and both sides are known, to clear themselves of some charges. But there is no hope in regard to the charge of allowing the extermination of the Armenians—a crime by which they alone could hope to benefit.

CONCLUSION

AND now, in conclusion, let me pose frankly this question: *Have neutral nations any responsibility in regard to the Armenians?*

For neutral nations in general, the answer depends upon whether the influence and action of a nation ought to be confined wholly to internal affairs. Those who give to their own conscience and to God the answer of Cain, say frankly: "No, we are not our brother's keeper. We have all that we can do to look after ourselves." If this type of mentality had controlled the councils of the nations throughout the past twenty centuries, would there be a Christian civilization?

Would history be able to record a single altruistic deed to a nation's credit? Would slavery ever have been abolished? The other type is composed of those who believe that man does not live by bread alone, or for himself alone, and that nations, as well as individuals, have responsibilities towards others—especially if those others are weak and oppressed.

Let us leave wholly to one side the argument of higher morality, this abstract, intangible argument, which, when urged, causes many to shrug their shoulders and smile. Let us come to the concrete reason for the direct responsibility of two nations to intervene on behalf of the Armenians. Among neutral and passive onlookers, who have been silent while the darkest page of modern history is being written, the Americans and Swiss should

not forget that their money and their representatives have been working for two generations in Turkey to elevate the Armenians. Together with French, British, Germans, and Italians, the Americans and Swiss have helped to reawaken the national spirit of the Armenian nation. They have infused new life into the Armenian Church. They have made researches into Armenian history and have given to the world the results of those researches. They have taught the Armenians European languages, and have imparted to a race that had become ignorant and backward, because separated from Europe, the spirit of Occidental civilization. *Were they seeking out victims to deck with garlands for the sacrifice? Were they fatting the calf for the slaughter?* Do not say no! For the practical result

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of their efforts to elevate the Armenian race is that long journey from home to the Valley of the Euphrates—now become the Valley of Death.

Let us think hard. And then, for God's sake, let us act!

SOURCES

1. Report of American Committee on Armenian Atrocities. New York, October, 1915.

The report contains thirty-five extracts from the testimony of eye-witnesses, covering the period April 27 to August 3, 1915, from all parts of Asia Minor. Twenty-five representative Americans (including Hon. Oscar S. Strauss, twice American Ambassador to Turkey, Cardinal James Gibbons, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, and former President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard University), signed this report, which states that each bit of testimony has been subjected to careful and extensive investigation, and that "the sources are unquestioned as to the veracity, integrity, and authority of the writers."

2. Official report of the Parliamentary Debate in the House of Lords, on Wednesday, October 6, 1915. London, Parliamentary Debates, H. of L., volume xix., 67.

¹ Interpellation of the Earl of Cromer, speech of Viscount Bryce, and comments of the Marquess of Crewe.

3. Lord Bryce's revision and enlargement of the official report of his speech, as given in "Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation,"

by Arnold J. Toynbee. London, November, 1915.

4. German missionaries' letters to the *Sonnenaufgang*, published by Deutscher Hülfsbund für christliches Liebeswerk im Orient.

5. Narrative of Dikran Andreasian, translated by Rev. Stephen Trowbridge, and published in *The Star of the East*. London, November, 1915.

6. Testimony of eye-witnesses, published in the Boulogne-sur-Mer *Telegramme*, September 17; Paris *Temps*, September 15; Limoges *Courrier du Centre*, September 15; *Tribune de Genève*, September 4 and 24, October 14; *Journal de Genève*, October 13 and 24; *Gazette de Lausanne*, October 24; New York *Evening Post*, October 18. Résumés and editorial comments in Manchester *Guardian*, August 16 and October 26; London *Times*, October 8; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, October 9; *Paris-Midi*, October 17. All these dates, of course, are in 1915.

7. Circular letters of various dates from July 6 to October 22, 1915, sent out by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, Mass., which are signed by James L. Barton.

8. A number of as yet unpublished personal letters. For obvious reasons, I cannot give the names of the writers, and the places from which they were written.

9. Personal conversations with persons of unimpeachable integrity and unquestioned authority, who have returned between September 15 and November 20 from Constantinople and Asia Minor. Their names must of necessity be withheld at this moment.

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